

ETHNOBOTANICAL AND ETHNOPHARMACOLOGICAL  
DOCUMENTATION OF ANTIMALARIAL PLANTS USED BY THE JAKUN  
COMMUNITY IN KG PETA, ENDAU-ROMPIN, JOHOR, MALAYSIA

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*This thesis is dedicated to my beloved mother, Rohanah Hashim  
a strong and gentle soul  
who is nursing me with affection and love  
and her dedication to my success in life  
&  
to my husband, Faiz Akmal  
for earning an honest living for us and  
for supporting and encouraging me to believe in myself.*

*In memory of  
my late father, Ismail Alip  
without you  
I would not be who I am today.*

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## ABSTRACT

Malaria, one of the leading infectious diseases in many tropical regions including Malaysia is caused by the parasite *Plasmodium*. An ethnobotanical survey of medicinal plants used by the indigenous people particularly the Jakun tribe from Kg. Peta, Endau-Rompin, Johor for the treatment of malaria and malaria associated symptoms was conducted using a semi-structured interview. The declining popularity of application of traditional remedies by the young generation threatens the disappearance of traditional knowledge possessed mainly by the older generation. Hence, the need for documentation of this knowledge justifies the relevance of this study. Out of 19 species (17 families) were recorded, 7 species: *Hodgsonia macrocarpa*, *Pentaphragma begoniifolium*, *Rennellia elliptica*, *Saprosma corymbosa*, *Strychnos ignatii*, *Tacca integrifolia* and *Tetracera macrophylla* were investigated for phytochemical and *in vitro* antiplasmodial activities. Twelve aqueous and 12 methanolic extracts were screened for antiplasmodial phytochemical classes i.e., alkaloids, flavonoids, terpenoids and anthraquinones using thin-layer chromatography (TLC). Results revealed the presence of at least one of the phytochemical class in each extracts. Extracts were subjected to antiplasmodial activity through histidine-rich protein II (HRP2) assay against K1 strain of *P. falciparum* chloroquine-resistant. Overall, ten methanolic extracts from *H. macrocarpa* (stem), *P. begoniifolium* (root, stem and leaves), *R. elliptica* (root, stem and leaves), *S. corymbosa* (leaves), *T. integrifolia* (root) and *T. macrophylla* (stem) have potential antiplasmodial activities against chloroquine-resistant *P. falciparum* ( $IC_{50} < 10 \mu\text{g/mL}$ ). The part of the plants species involves indicates statistically significant difference of  $IC_{50}$  between the kinds of extractions ( $p < 0.05$ ). The results scientifically validated the plants used in Jakun's traditional medicine displayed promising therapeutic properties and further studies could lead to develop phytomedicines in the treatment of malaria.



## ABSTRAK

Malaria, salah satu penyakit berjangkit yang utama di kebanyakan kawasan tropika termasuk Malaysia yang disebabkan oleh parasit *Plasmodium*. Satu survei etnobotani tumbuhan ubat-ubatan yang digunakan oleh orang-orang asli terutamanya suku Jakun yang tinggal di Kg. Peta, Endau-Rompin, Johor bagi rawatan malaria dan gejala-gejalanya telah dijalankan menggunakan temu duga separa terarah. Penurunan populariti penggunaan ubat-ubatan tradisional oleh generasi muda menyebabkan kepupusan pengetahuan tradisional terutamanya yang dimiliki oleh generasi tua. Oleh itu, keperluan mendokumentasi pengetahuan ini adalah bagi menjustifikasi kerelevanan kajian ini. Daripada 19 spesies (17 famili) yang direkodkan, 7 spesies: *Hodgsonia macrocarpa*, *Pentaphragma begoniifolium*, *Rennellia elliptica*, *Saprosma corymbosa*, *Strychnos ignatii*, *Tacca integrifolia* dan *Tetracera macrophylla* telah dikaji bagi fitokimia dan aktiviti *in vitro* antiplasmodial. Dua belas akueus dan 12 ekstrak metanol telah disaring bagi kelas fitokimia antiplasmodial i.e., alkaloid, flavonoid, terpenoid dan antrakuinon dengan menggunakan kromatografi lapisan-nipis (TLC). Hasil kajian menunjukkan kehadiran sekurang-kurangnya satu kelas fitokimia dalam setiap ekstrak. Ekstrak-ekstrak ini menjalani aktiviti antiplasmodial melalui assai protein kaya-histidina II (HRP2) terhadap strain K1 *P. falciparum* rintang-klorokuina. Keseluruhannya, sepuluh ekstrak metanol iaitu *H. macrocarpa* (batang), *P. begoniifolium* (akar, batang dan daun), *R. elliptica* (akar, batang dan daun), *S. corymbosa* (daun), *T. integrifolia* (akar) dan *T. macrophylla* (batang) mempunyai potensi aktiviti antiplasmodial terhadap *P. falciparum* rintang-klorokuina ( $IC_{50} < 10 \mu g/mL$ ). Bahagian spesies tumbuhan yang terlibat menunjukkan perbezaan statistik  $IC_{50}$  yang signifikan antara jenis pengekstrakan ( $p < 0.05$ ). Hasil kajian telah mengesahkan secara saintifik bahawa tumbuhan yang digunakan dalam perubatan tradisional masyarakat Jakun ini memaparkan ciri terapeutik dan kajian lanjutan mampu membawa kepada pembangunan fitokimia dalam rawatan malaria.

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## LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

~	-	Similarity
>	-	Greater than
<	-	Less than
±	-	Uncertainty
%	-	Percentage
°C	-	Degree Celsius
µg/mL	-	Microgram per milliliter
µL	-	Microliter
µL/well	-	Microliter per well
µM	-	Micromolar
cm	-	Centimeter
g	-	Gram
g/mL	-	Gram per milliliter
gsm	-	Grams per square meter
ha	-	Hectare
in	-	Inch
kg	-	Kilogram
km	-	Kilometer
km <sup>2</sup>	-	Square kilometer
m	-	Meter
mg	-	Milligram
mg/kg	-	Milligram per kilogram
mg/mL	-	Milligram per milliliter
mM	-	Millimolar
mm	-	Millimeter
mL	-	Milliliter
ng/mL	-	Nanogram per milliliter

nM	-	Nanomolar
nm	-	Nanometer
rpm	-	Revolutions per minute
w/w	-	Weight per weight
wt/vol	-	Weight per volume
ABS	-	Access and Benefit Sharing
ACT	-	Artemisinin based Combination Therapy
ANOVA	-	Analysis of Variance
Art	-	Artemisinin
ASMQ	-	Artesunate-mefloquine
B.C.	-	Before Christ
BSA	-	Bovine serum albumin
BSCII	-	Biosafety Cabinet Class II
C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>14</sub>	-	Hexane
C <sub>4</sub> H <sub>8</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	-	Ethyl acetate
C <sub>4</sub> H <sub>10</sub> O	-	Butanol
CBD	-	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCM	-	Complete Culture Medium
CH <sub>3</sub> COOH	-	Acetic acid
CO <sub>2</sub>	-	Carbon dioxide
CQ	-	Chloroquine
DBP	-	Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka
DCM	-	Dichloromethane
DMSO	-	Dimethyl sulphoxide
E	-	East
ELISA	-	Enzyme-linked Immunosorbent Assay
EtOAc	-	Ethyl acetate
FAO	-	Food and Agriculture Organization
FRIM	-	Forest Research Institute Malaysia
GMT	-	Greenwich Mean Time
GPS	-	Global Positioning System
H <sub>2</sub> O	-	Water
H <sub>2</sub> SO <sub>4</sub>	-	Sulfuric acid
HEPES	-	4-(2-hydroxyethyl)-1-piperazineethanesulfonic acid

HRP2	-	Histidine-rich Protein II
IC <sub>50</sub>	-	50% Inhibitory Concentration
IC <sub>90</sub>	-	90% Inhibitory Concentration
IgG	-	Immunoglobulin G
IgM	-	Immunoglobulin M
ILO	-	International Labour Organization
IMR	-	Institute for Medical Research
JAKOA	-	Department of Orang Asli Development
JNPC	-	Johor National Parks Corporation
Kg.	-	Kampung
M	-	Molar
Mef	-	Mefloquine
MeOH	-	Methanol
MOH	-	Ministry of Health Malaysia
N	-	North
NaCl	-	Sodium chloride
NaHCO <sub>3</sub>	-	Sodium bicarbonate
NATO	-	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OD	-	Optical Density
PBS	-	Phosphate buffer solution
PBST	-	PBS-Tween
pH	-	Power of Hydrogen
PIC	-	Prior Inform Consent
pLDH	-	Plasmodium Lactate Dehydrogenase
Q	-	Quinine
R&D	-	Research and Development
RAMSAR	-	The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance
RBC	-	Red blood cell
<i>R<sub>f</sub></i>	-	Relative Front
RPMI	-	Roswell Park Memorial Institute Medium
SDX/PYR	-	Sulfadoxine/pyrimethamine
SPR	-	Slide Positivity Rate
THM	-	Traditional Herbal Medicine

TK	-	Traditional Knowledge
TLC	-	Thin-layer Chromatography
TM	-	Traditional Medicine
TMB	-	3,3', 5,5;-tetramethylbenzidine
TNJER	-	Johor National Park Endau-Rompin
UNCCD	-	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCED	-	United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development
UNEP	-	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	-	United States of America
UTHM	-	Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia
UV	-	Ultraviolet
WHO	-	World Health Organization
WIPO	-	World Intellectual Property Organization



PTTA UTHM  
PERPUSTAKAAN TUNKU TUN AMINAH

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## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

### Journals:

- (i) **Ismail, I.,** Linatoc, A. C., Mohamed, M., & Tokiman, L. (2015). Documentation of medicinal plants traditionally used by the Jakun people of Endau-Rompin (Peta) for treatments of malaria-like symptoms. *Jurnal Teknologi*, 77(31), 63-69.
- (ii) **Ismail, I.,** Linatoc, A. C., & Mohamed, M. (2016). Antiplasmodial potential of selected medicinal plants used traditionally in Johor National Park Endau-Rompin. *International Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences*.  
[Accepted with minor correction]

**Proceeding/ Conference/ Seminar:**

- (i) **Ismail, I.,** Linatoc, A. C., Mohamed, M., & Tokiman, L. (2014). Documentation of medicinal plants traditionally used in treatments of malaria. In *Bio Johor 2014*, Persada Johor Convention Centre, Johor Bahru, 25-27 August 2014.
- (ii) **Ismail, I.,** Linatoc, A. C., Mohamed, M., & Tokiman, L. (2015). Traditional knowledge on medicinal plants among the Jakun people for the treatment of malaria-like symptoms in Kampung Peta, Endau-Rompin Johor, Malaysia. In *International Conference on Biodiversity (ICB) 2015*, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, Johor, 16-17 November 2015.
- (iii) **Ismail, I.,** Linatoc, A. C., Mohamed, M., & Tokiman, L. (2016). Herbal medicine traditionally used by indigenous people in Endau-Rompin, Johor, Malaysia. In *Joint Seminar on Biodiversity & Conservation UTHM-UGM*. Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, 13 April 2016.







## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Ethnobotanical research involves the relationship between human and plants in many aspects of life such as food resources, portion in cosmetics, base in textiles and elements in farming. Ethnopharmacology on the other hand, emphasizes on the pharmacological treatment in general (Ríos, 2011). Such study is itemized on the bio-evaluation of the effectiveness of traditional medicines. Ethnomedicine also has close relation with ethnobotany and ethnopharmacology as it is based on written sources and verbal information such as knowledge and practices which are passed from generations to generations for centuries (Ríos, 2011).

In the modern era, some people are still practicing traditional treatment and medication in their lives. Most of the under-developed countries practically uses the plants and herbs for health and treatment which are the repetition of their ancestors' practices for generations. In Malaysia, majority of natives from different ethnics exercise different traditions in using herbs and plants as medicinal sources. They have a close relationship with the forest since forest products have traditionally formed as the basis of their livelihood (Lin, 2005).

Medicinal plants are used by Orang Asli Jakun in Kg. Peta, Endau-Rompin to treat and cure people who were infected by certain illnesses or diseases. The location where they stay in the Johor National Park Endau-Rompin (TNJER) make it possible for them to access suitable plants and herbs in the treatment of various illnesses or used as sources of food. Most of the older generation (above 40 years old) who believed in the traditional medication based on plants. Therefore, they are

knowledgeable in many aspects of traditional medication and practices. This traditional knowledge (TK) and practices are inherited and passed on continuously to the younger generation. This traditional knowledge is essential to be preserved but the young generations now lack the urge to learn the traditional practices as they prefer the convenience provided by the use of modern medication. The consequence of the new generation being indulged in modernizations results in the erosion of traditional knowledge (Ismail *et al.*, 2014). Hence, the ways in which the Orang Asli Jakun in Kg. Peta treats illnesses like malaria and malaria-associated symptoms should be documented promptly so that the TK on the use of medicinal plants may be preserved before they are eroded and totally forgotten.

Like any other communities, the Orang Asli of TNJER also suffer from malaria. Malaria is a very old disease and a major public health concern in many tropical and subtropical countries (Jonville *et al.*, 2008; Adebayo & Krettli, 2011; Basir *et al.*, 2012) including Malaysia even though malaria control and prevention activities over the last few decades have greatly reduced the incidence of malaria (Sanders *et al.*, 2014).

Malaria is an infectious disease transmitted from one person to another via the bite of female *Anopheles* mosquito. There are four species of plasmodia causing malaria in humans, namely: *Plasmodium falciparum*, *P. vivax*, *P. malariae* and *P. ovale* (Adebayo & Krettli, 2011; WHO, 2014). Additionally, *P. knowlesi*, a simian malaria parasite is now recognized as the fifth plasmodium species that can cause malaria to humans (Singh & Daneshvar, 2010; Azidah *et al.*, 2014).

The onsets of malaria symptoms are nonspecific. This is due to presence of one or more vague features of general body weakness. The incubation period is about 10 to 15 days after the first bite by the infected mosquito. The symptoms appear are fever, chills, shivering, headache, loss of appetite, vomiting, dizziness, muscle and joint aches, fatigue and nausea. If severe cases of malaria are not addressed properly, this can lead to complications and eventually death (WHO, 2014).

## 1.2 Problem statements

### 1.2.1 The erosion of traditional knowledge (TK)

All community of indigenous people worldwide possess their own unique traditional knowledge. Traditional knowledge is very diverse. It covers literary, artistic or scientific works, song, dance, medical treatments and practices as well as agricultural technologies and techniques. The precious medicinal values that hold by folk medicines usually belong to indigenous people as they have been using medicinal plants since myriad of time (Lim *et al.*, 2010).

Medicinal plants have been demonstrated to be potential source in the medical field while the indigenous people keep and transfer the knowledge and practices usually through an informal system and adapting it as their way of life. This knowledge is often transmitted from one generation to another as such the traditional uses of many plants have not been documented. The lack of survey and documentation of medicinal plants that are used by indigenous people leads to knowledge erosion and lost with succeeding generations.

This phenomenon occurs in Malaysia due to less consciousness among the community of the indigenous ethnics about traditional knowledge (Kulip, 2003; Lin, 2005; Samuel *et al.*, 2010). The documentation of traditional usage of medicinal plants to treat certain diseases is still less favorable. In contrast with others ethnics in the world such as the Chinese, the Indians, the Bhutanese and etc., keep upgrading the data into pharmacopoeia. In addition, nowadays the young generations just take a shortcut by receiving modern treatment in hospital. They are use conventional approach because of the belief to modern medicine is strongly convincing. Exposure to modern culture also a key reasons that contribute to degradation of traditional knowledge.

Hence, by conducting a proper survey and documentation be able to avoid danger of losing this precious knowledge before degradation of natural habitats and ecosystems leading to loss of plants and cultural diversity. Therefore, there is a need to document traditional knowledge especially about medicinal plant diversity and how the native communities are using them.

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